



# Nebraska Celebrates Keelboat Nickel at Site of First Lewis and Clark Tribal Council

August 3, 2004

Fort Atkinson State Historical Park, Nebraska — Staged on a full-scale replica of the keelboat that carried the Lewis and Clark expedition through the rivers of the Louisiana Territory, United States Mint officials joined Lt. Governor David Heineman and the Nebraska Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission in a celebration of the new Keelboat 5-cent coin (nickel). The nickel, which features Lewis and Clark's keelboat in full sail on the reverse (tails side), is the second design of the United States Mint's Westward Journey Nickel Series™, commemorating the historic journey. The coin goes into circulation nationwide this month.

Today's celebration took place on the site of the first Lewis and Clark Tribal Council, held exactly 200 years ago. On August 3, 1804, Lewis and Clark met with members of the Oto and Missouri tribes, the first of such gatherings they would hold with American Indians whom they encountered along the trail. Lewis and Clark also recommended the site as a military outpost, and in 1819, it became Fort Atkinson. The full-scale keelboat replica used in today's celebration was constructed by acclaimed boatwright Butch Bouvier.

A parade of local area Boy Scouts opened the celebration, accompanied by the Lewis & Clark Fife and Drum Corps. The ceremony was hosted by Ron Hull of the Nebraska Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission and featured remarks by Lt. Governor Heineman; historian Gary Moulton; and Gloria Eskridge, Associate Director for Sales and Marketing at the United States Mint. The celebration was capped by a nickel exchange held with the assistance of a local bank. Children who attended received a free nickel.

The new Keelboat nickel design, rendered by United States Mint sculptor/engraver Al Maletsky, features an angled, side-view of the keelboat with full sail that transported members of the expedition and their supplies in search of a northwest passage to the Pacific Ocean. Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark are in full uniform in the bow. Built to the specifications of Captain Lewis, the 55-foot craft could be sailed, rowed, poled like a raft, or towed from the riverbank.

The United States Mint released the first coin of the 2004 Westward Journey Nickel Series, featuring the Peace Medal reverse design, on March 1, 2004.

On April 23, 2003, President Bush signed into law legislation authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to change the design of the nickel through 2005 to commemorate the bicentennials of the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition. A likeness of Jefferson will remain on the obverse throughout the nickel series, and his home at Monticello will return to the reverse in 2006, although both may not be the likenesses of Jefferson and Monticello seen up until 2004.

The nickel bearing the likeness of Thomas Jefferson on the obverse (heads side) and Monticello on the reverse (tails side) was first issued in 1938. Felix Schlag won a design contest for the Jefferson nickel from among nearly 400 artists and was awarded \$1,000 for his design.

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